

# Project: Gender Spectrum Gender Inclusive Schools CDEP



## LOCATION



## GENDER SPECTRUM’S MISSION

To create a gender-inclusive world for all children and youth. To accomplish this, we help families, organizations, and institutions increase understandings of gender and consider the implications that evolving views have for each of us.

## CDEP GOAL AND ABSTRACT

Through Gender Spectrum’s support, school personnel will gain knowledge, skills, and commitment to be more gender-inclusive. (A gender-inclusive school accounts for the gender diversity of all students, including those who are transgender and non-binary.) Our approach rests on the premise that to best serve transgender and non-binary youth in schools, we must transform the whole school into a place of inclusion and wellness, where all stakeholders are educated to move toward gender inclusion instead of gender exclusion.

Change will be measured by a set of surveys spanning one year and qualitative case studies.

## THEORY OF ACTION

When educators and other key adults in students’ lives have the knowledge, skills and commitment to create gender inclusive schools, existing research suggests that we can expect the following:

1. Students who are struggling with their gender identity or expression will be more likely to seek support within the schools and access services outside of schools if needed.
2. Students all along the gender spectrum will see their experiences represented and affirmed within their schools and mental health challenges associated with bullying and isolation of transgender and non-binary youth, such as anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation, will decrease.



## INTERVENTIONS

We work with schools to ensure that they have knowledge and tools to work with students PK-12. Through our interventions educators learn overarching concepts with which to address gender using these [four entry points](#):

- **Internal:** Increasing self-knowledge and understanding of gender
- **Institutional:** Creating systems to support gender inclusion
- **Interpersonal:** Interrupting gender biases and proactively modeling gender inclusion
- **Instructional:** Use teaching strategies and lessons to instill greater awareness and understanding about gender.

This CDEP makes use of **early intervention and prevention strategies** to build the capacities of schools to be more gender inclusive and specifically to develop a school climate where transgender and nonbinary students are safe, seen and supported.

Specifically this work is delivered through the following:

### The Inclusive Schools Network

The Gender Spectrum Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) is a learning community of educational professionals committed to creating school settings where every child’s gender is seen, understood, and respected. The ISN equips members with skills and knowledge to be leaders in bringing gender inclusive schools to their institutions. It includes a **training of trainer module** to help participants educate their own schools and communities. The ISN is a one year commitment which includes:

- A two-day Inclusive Schools Institute, comprised of a cohort of educators in the region
- Access to online workshops focusing on different topics related to gender-inclusive schools
- Regularly scheduled “drop-in” office hours with Gender Spectrum staff
- Gender Spectrum resources, including slides, handouts, tools, videos and communications
- Participation in ISN groups and forums on the Gender Spectrum Lounge
- Archive of lessons and other resources created by Gender Spectrum and ISN members

### Foundations of Gender Inclusive Schools

This 2.5-hour workshop is designed to establish basic understandings of gender diversity and approaches for applying them to professional practice. Through direct presentation, short videos of young people talking about gender, group reflection and discussion, this workshop takes participants through a review of basic gender concepts and terminology. The session then builds on this foundation, modeling concrete strategies for applying the lens of gender diversity to school practices. Through this training participants will have practical skills and knowledge to create gender inclusive learning environment for all students while also accounting for the unique experiences of transgender and non-binary students.

Schools that participate in the *Foundations of Gender Inclusive Schools* may also opt to engage in follow-up sessions on topics related to supporting gender-expansive students, gender inclusive leadership, and curriculum development or join the Inclusive Schools Network.



“ I really appreciated how clearly gender identity was explained through the three main components. I never thought of gender identity as being complex. But now I understand that just because it was not a complex journey for me to identify my gender, doesn't mean it is not a complex, challenging journey for others. ”



## GENDER, YOUTH, SCHOOLS AND MENTAL HEALTH

### CA YRBS and Healthy Kids Data

- Over half of transgender students were bullied and 40% skipped school due to feeling unsafe.
- 41.5% of transgender youth have seriously considered attempting suicide.
- Transgender youth are 10 times more likely to have been threatened with harm than their cisgender peers.
- Transgender youth of color are more likely to have experienced bullying and engaged in self-harm than their white transgender peers.

### The Importance of Schools:

- Teachers are the adults that distressed transgender students are most likely to reach out to for help.
- Unwelcoming gender climates are associated with negative health outcomes for transgender youth.
- Programs designed to prevent bullying are less effective when they do not address gender-based violence.

## EVALUATION & OUTCOMES

### Key Research Questions:

- 1) To what degree is participation in the CDEP interventions related to:
  - Changes in participants’ knowledge, attitudes, intentions?
  - Implementation of strategies outlined in the four entry points to gender inclusive schools?
  - Students’ ability to seek gender related support and/or services from the school and community?
- 2) What lessons can be learned about how to make these services as culturally responsive as possible?

### Evaluation Model

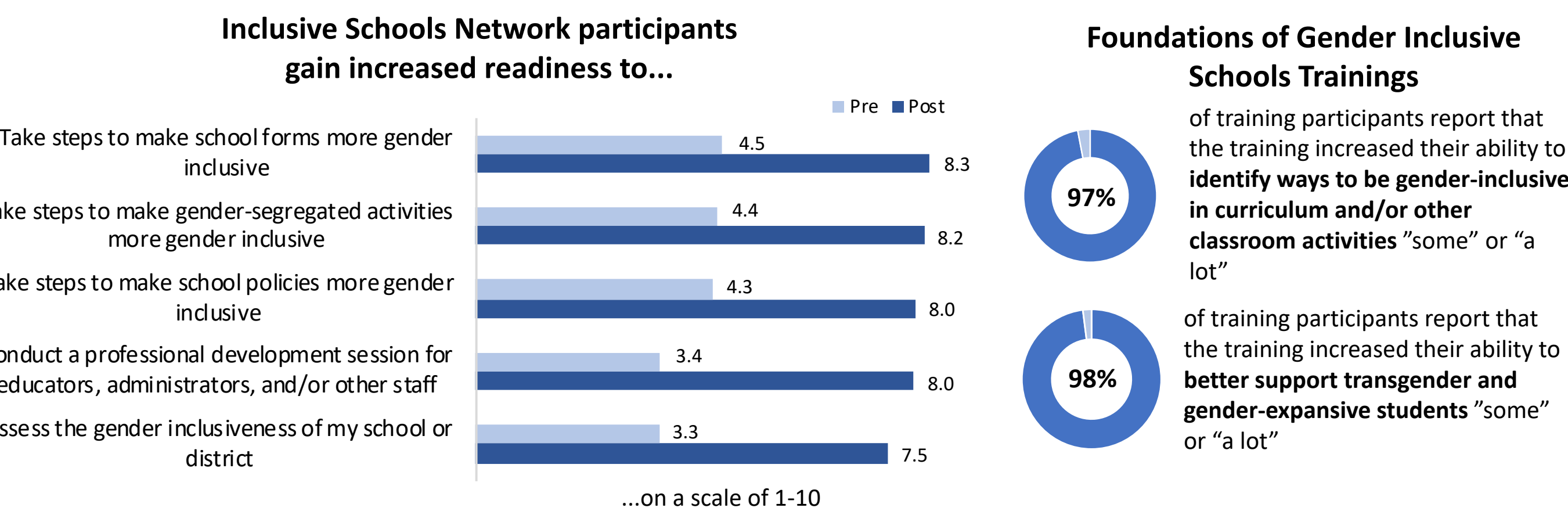
Gender Spectrum and our outside evaluators, Health Management Associates, have worked closely with our advisory group to develop and revise survey instruments to measure program impact. Participants are asked to fill out surveys before and after each training and one year following the training. In addition, qualitative case studies, including focus groups and key informant interviews, are being conducted in diverse locations. We are waiting for IRB approval to do student focus groups.

The survey model is based on measuring change in Gender Spectrum’s four entry points for school change. These include Internal, Institutional, Interpersonal, and Instructional change. It is also based on research associating school change with educator’s knowledge, behavior, and attitudes related to any given topic.

Since the beginning of our CDEP we have :

- Launched and maintained **5 Inclusive Schools Networks**
- Conducted **25 Foundations of Gender Inclusive Schools** Trainings
- Trained **over 1,100** educators, administrators, and other school staff

**Positive change has been identified in all areas being measured, increasing participants’ capacity to advance gender inclusion in schools. Here are just a few examples from both interventions:**



## LOOKING AHEAD

As we continue our implementation and evaluation, we hope to answer these additional questions:

- What school, district, and community variables are associated with successful implementation? Are there differences based on demographics, region, or other characteristics?
- How can we ensure that this evaluation and our work in schools best reflects the experiences of students?
- What is the longer-term impact of these interventions - one year out and beyond?
- What kinds of partnerships and funding will help scale this work to reach more communities?
- What other datasets could help us dig deeper into outcomes to understand our impact on students and school communities? (e.g., Healthy Kids, Youth Risk Behavior Survey)